

## N4T Investigators: Disappearing Dogs? Update

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Tucson - The News 4 Tucson Investigators reported in July that dozens of dogs at Tucson Greyhound Park had been idle for an unusually long time. Greyhound advocates were worried about the health of 38 dogs that hadn't raced for at least six weeks, because they typically race about every four days. Then we found out one of the greyhounds, "Last Two Stars," had been dead since February, due to twisted gut. When we interviewed track general manager Dale Popp in July, he said all the dogs were fine. And he voluntarily extended this invitation:

“The public has the ability, they can call, come in, and say, 'Hey, let me see one of these dogs, and I can make that happen.’”

Cynthia David and Lisa Ritter-Baker are among the two dozen people who called Popp take him up on his invitation. David says she called him on July 16 and 17, and that he called her back on July 22nd, when she told him she'd like to see the dogs.

We asked David, “And has he been in touch with you?” She replied, “He has not.”

Ritter-Baker says she called Popp twice, on July 15 and July 27, and that neither he nor anyone from the track has called her back.

In a follow-up interview last Wednesday, we asked Popp how many people he's allowed in the kennel. He replied, “I haven't set up anything with anybody.”

Popp explained he wanted to wait until the “media attention” blows over. He also said he wants “average viewers, not members of a special interest group.” Popp said, “I'd love to make good, but I will not put this track at risk for somebody to potentially do something unethical and purposely try to sabotage something to make us look bad, and without a doubt there are people out there, they're that close from being in the looney bin.”

David and Ritter-Baker say they don't belong to any special interest groups, they're simply concerned dog owners. Popp says he's worried that special interest group members would secretly feed the dogs something to make them sick and get the track in trouble with the state.

Ritter-Baker responded, “I think that's ridiculous. We're there to make sure that the dogs are safe and it would be somewhat counter intuitive to go there to harm the dogs.”

We said to Popp, “It's been more than two months since you invited the public to come see the dogs, and not one person has been allowed back there.” He said, “Eventually, hopefully, I'll be able to do that.”

We replied, “You made the invitation. I'm asking you, and you still haven't answered me, when, time frame, can they come see the dogs?” Popp said, “When it's convenient and when this dies down to where it's not an

emotionally-charged telecast. When things are normal to where i don't have to worry about somebody sabotaging the backside.

Popp says he doesn't understand why there are still any questions about the greyhounds' health. He says several of the dogs have resumed racing. He also cited last month's announcement (which we reported) by the Arizona Department of Gaming, which began after our investigation. The department said that other than the dead dog, the other 37 in question were fine. But remember: the track initially did not tell us about the death of "Last Two Stars"; TGP first said the dog was petted out (adopted). The state initially told us that "Last Two Stars" was euthanized in June, before later saying the dog died in February, the day after its final race, of twisted gut.

Cynthia David says "I think we need some answers."

Lisa Ritter-Baker says, "I would really like to see what goes on at the track."

Finally, we asked Popp, "When do you think you might allow them in?" "Soon as possible. I need to get with the kennel people."

We will let you know what happens regarding Dale Popp's invitation.

One reason so many people are putting Tucson Greyhound Park under the microscope of accountability: the track receives hundreds of thousands of dollars from the state every year in hardship tax credits. As we reported earlier this year, one state lawmaker from Tucson is going to propose in the next legislative session that the tax credit be abolished.

You can see the list of the Greyhounds that had not raced since at least May 30 by [clicking here](#).

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